

Abstract

Rural areas of developing countries are characterized by the following scenarios: low population density, isolation from developed urban centers, without power supply facilities, without or with poor communications means (telephone, roads etc) and habited with low income earning communities. With these characteristics, provision of telecommunication services to these areas using traditional wired telephone systems with centralized network architecture becomes prohibitively expensive and thus not viable in many cases.

The Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), using wireless technologies and systems have been considered by many providers as an efficient and cost-effective means to bridge the rural-urban information gap, in particular for Communication services provisioning (preferably the native IP applications, telephone and facsimile) in Rural Tanzania.

On the other hand, the entry of the 21st century has been posed by intense competition in trade and invention. One important factor for any society to sustain such competition is the availability of accessible and reliable means of communication. The Fixed Wireless Access, thus, is becoming a popular tool towards this end. However Tanzanian telecommunication like other countries was characterized with monopoly resulting into inefficiency, unreliability and limited accessibility. Restructuring became necessary to enhance performance of the sector but also wireless technologies have made network architecture cheap.

The Sector Restructuring went hand-in-hand with establishment of a reliable regulatory system. In line with the requirements of a competitive system the regulatory system took over the responsibility of Resources allocation such as Radio spectrum, which is a key to wireless communication systems deployment in the country and worldwide.

This presentation starts by defining the rural areas and broadband. It further describes the regulatory processes that are currently in place in Tanzania to facilitate wireless access in rural areas, challenges and other collaborative efforts. It also highlights on the technologies and systems used to offer broadband in the country.